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Status Update

Activities Associated with the New Bedford High School and the Parker Street Waste Site
New Bedford
Massachusetts Department of Public Health/Bureau of Environmental Health (MDPH/BEH)

June 10, 2010

The Bureau of Environmental Health (BEH) within MDPH has been involved in a wide variety of discussions related to the Parker Street Waste Site and the New Bedford High School. The focus of MDPH's work however is primarily related to two distinct sets of activities. The first relates to measuring serum PCB levels and analysis of cancer among residents of the neighborhoods surrounding the Parker Street Waste Site. The second involves a comprehensive evaluation of indoor environmental conditions at the New Bedford High School and an evaluation of serum PCB levels. The MDPH has also been provided a list of names and a reported diagnosis of cancer among school personnel which will also be reviewed by MDPH to determine whether the pattern of cancer appears unusual such that environmental factors may have played a role in their occurrence. This document provides an update on MDPH activities that may be of particular interest to school staff and/or students at the high school:

- MDPH/BEH recently sent out the results of our serum PCB testing program to all individuals in the New Bedford community who chose to participate, many of whom are current or former employees of the school. Individual letters were mailed to protect the privacy of participants.
- In addition to the preparation of a neighborhood report, MDPH/BEH is now preparing a summary report on the findings from the serum PCB testing program for interested school staff. To protect participants' confidentiality, only aggregate or summary data will be shared. This information will be combined in a report that also summarizes the findings of BEH's Indoor Air Quality Program inspections of the high school and information provided through interviews with school staff who chose to discuss their concerns about the high school indoor environment and/or their health concerns with BEH staff during the time of the IAQ inspections. BEH will include a review of the indoor sampling for PCBs that has occurred in the high school by the city's contractors.

MDPH/BEH will organize a meeting for school staff to present the results of this report. We will coordinate with the teachers' union and the school administration to hold the meeting at a time

that is convenient for the staff. Based on initial feedback, this meeting is likely to take place in the early fall, depending on the best time for interested school staff.

- For school staff who may also be residents living near the Parker Street Waste Site, MDPH/BEH will also be holding a separate public meeting later this summer to present the findings of a report on the serum PCB testing program as it relates to neighbors and residents of the PSWS area. This report will also include the results of a cancer incidence analysis for the PSWS neighborhood (that is, the five census tracts including and surrounding the PSWS). This analysis uses data collected by the Massachusetts Cancer Registry and is based on residence at diagnosis.

If you have any questions about these upcoming meetings or the reports being prepared, please call BEH at 617 624-5757.